

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 18 October 2022

Present:

Cllr L M N Morales (Chairman)
Cllr T Aziz (Vice-Chair)

Cllr A J Boote	Cllr P J T Graves
Cllr J Brown	Cllr S M Oades
Cllr G T Cosnahan	Cllr T G Spenser
Cllr S Dorsett	

Also Present: Councillors L S Lyons.

Absent: Councillors M A Whitehand.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 September 2022 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Whitehand.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

5. PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEALS

The Committee received a report on the planning appeals lodged and the appeal decisions.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee determined the following applications subject to the conditions, informatives, reasons for refusal or authorisation of enforcement action which appear in the published report to the Committee or as detailed in these minutes.

6a. 2022/0289 Dormer Cottage, Bonsey Lane and

6b. 2022/0290 Dormer Cottage, Bonsey Lane

[NOTE: The Planning Officer updated the Committee that since the report had been published the agent had provided an amended plan of the outbuilding. This had not been considered fully by Officers, but it was unlikely to alter the Officer recommendation to refuse. The agent had also provided further ecological information, however the Planning Officer advised that this did not alter their recommendation.]

The Committee agreed to consider the following two applications together.

The Committee considered the application PLAN/2022/0289 which proposed the erection of single storey side and rear extensions, erection of outbuilding to rear and works to restore and repair listed building.

The Committee considered application PLAN/2022/0290 which proposed listed Building Consent was sought for the erection of single storey side and rear extensions and internal and external works to restore and repair the listed building.

The Chairman queried why an ecological report was required for this application when similar extensions that had been built in the area had not required one. The Planning Officer explained that this was due to the history of the site; a previous application for the site proposed the current dwelling be demolished and two dwellings be built in place had required an Ecological Survey to be carried out which had shown evidence of bats. Since the existence of bats had been discovered, this requirement had now been carried through any subsequent applications for the site.

The Committee questioned why the application had been called in to the Committee by Councillor M Ali, who was not present at the meeting. The Chairman advised that she had contacted the Councillor who had explained that it was due to the lack of consistency regarding the Ecological Survey. The Planning Officer had now addressed this point as detailed above.

Some Members of the Committee acknowledged residents' frustration regarding the building as it had remained empty for a long time and in its current state it attracted antisocial behaviour. If approved, the application would set a precedent in the area. Members of the Committee had been contacted by many residents in support of the application, however comments were made by some Councillors regarding the importance the NPPF placed on the special character of listed buildings and some members thought that the mass and dominating effect did not respect the scale of the listed building.

Following a comment from a Member regarding removal of trees from the site, it was confirmed that the Arboricultural Officer had not made any objections.

Some Members commented that the application was not perfect, however it would be better than the current situation. Councillor T Aziz agreed with this viewpoint and commented that the proposed application would be better than the current situation and that the listed building features would be retained. He agreed that the proposed outbuilding was too large but was interested to see the amended plan that had been submitted since the report had been published. Councillor T Aziz proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor S Dorsett, that the application be deferred to the next meeting so that the Committee could receive an updated Ecological Report and view the amended plan for the outbuilding.

The Planning Officer advised that to date the additional ecological information consisted of two emails from an Ecologist that stated no bats were found. This was not sufficient, and a formal Ecological Report would need to be submitted in an acceptable format. The Committee queried whether the Planning Officers would be confident that this could be brought back to the next meeting on 8 November 2022. Thomas James commented that following receipt of an Ecological Survey, a re-consultation process with Surrey Wildlife Trust would also need to be factored in, which would mean this would not come back to the meeting on 8 November 2022.

Planning Officers commented that the amended outbuilding plans received only proposed a 10% reduction in mass, which they considered to still be unacceptable.

RESOLVED

That the applications be deferred to a future meeting, for the reasons detailed in the minutes.

6c. TPO/0004/2022 Land at 5 Barrens Close

[NOTE: The Arboricultural Officer reported that an email was sent to Councillors on 14 October 2022 along with an attached report; this had been noted but Officer had not had the opportunity to comment on this as it had been received after the report was published.]

The Committee considered a report which recommended to the Committee that a Tree Preservation Order be confirmed following the receipt of one letter of objection to the making of the Order. The Tree Preservation Order would protect an individual Birch tree on Land at 5 Barrens Close.

Councillor L Lyons, Ward Councillor, did not support the making of the TPO. He reminded the Committee that the report before them was not related to the determination of the planning application that was considered in June 2022. Councillor L Lyons had encouraged Committee Members to visit the tree, which in his opinion was nothing special with its branches overhanging the house, roots damaging the path and property and the tree was also leaning. Councillor L Lyons thought the tree was nearing the end of its life and was causing heartache to the owners of the property.

Some Member of the Committee agreed with the points made by Councillor L Lyons and did not think a TPO should be placed on this silver birch tree.

Other Members thought the Committee should listen to the advice of the experts and did not think there was evidence of the tree causing the damage to the property.

In the external report the tree had been labelled as a U grade tree. Following a question, the Arboricultural Officer explained that the Council did not grade trees in instances of TPOs and the important part of protecting this tree was down to the vitality of the tree and the sylvan character of the area. It was inevitable that trees would die, but the space left could be used to plant a replacement tree, and this was also part of the reason to place a TPO.

Following a question regarding the water absorption of trees and potential water damage if removed, the Arboricultural Officer explained that if the tree was removed there was a chance that the property could suffer from 'heave', particularly if there was already an issue with subsidence. With regard to the damage evident in the property, it was noted that it was the responsibility of the owner to provide evidence that the tree specifically was causing this damage and it was not being caused by other means. It was noted that if the Committee agreed to place this TPO and then subsequently the evidence was provided to prove that the tree was in fact causing the damage this would be assessed and action could be taken at that point to ensure the tree did not cause further damage.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the recommendation to confirm the Tree Preservation Order. The votes for and against the recommendation were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs J Brown, S Dorsett, P Graves S Oades and T Spenser.

TOTAL: 5

Against: Cllrs T Aziz, A Boote and G Cosnahan.

TOTAL: 3

Present but not voting: Cllr L Morales (Chairman).

TOTAL: 1

The Tree Preservation Order was therefore confirmed.

RESOLVED

That Tree Preservation Order Ref. TPO/0004/2022 be confirmed without modification.

7. UPDATE ON PLANNING PEER REVIEW

The Committee received an update on actions of the Peer Review and how things had progressed.

The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED

That the updated Action Plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 8.20 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____